

## Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 STATE 155714  
ORIGIN NODS-00

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DRAFTED BY:S/S-O:SGOLDSMITH

APPROVED BY:S/S-O:SGOLDSMITH

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO WHITE HOUSE IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 155714

NODIS

FOR DR BRZEZINSKI ONLY

FOLLOWING REPEAT MOSCOW 9621 DATED JUL 05:

QTE: S E C R E T MOSCOW 9621

NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, UR

SUBJECT: BREZHNEV'S HEALTH

SUMMARY: IMPRESSION FROM HOUR-AND-FORTY-MINUTE MEETING WITH  
BREZHNEV TODAY IS THAT REPORTS OF BREZHNEV'S DECLINING  
HEALTH MAY HAVE BEEN EXAGGERATED. HE SEEMED ALERT, MOBILE AND HIS  
ENUNCIATION WAS NO WORSE THAN IT HAS BEEN FOR SEVERAL YEARS.  
IN FACT,HE SEEMED IN BETTER SHAPE THAN IN MARCH MEETING  
WITH SECRETARY. END SUMMARY.

1. I CAME AWAY FROM MY MEETING WITH BREZHNEV TODAY WITH  
THE OVERALL IMPRESSION THAT SOME OF THE RECENT REPORTS  
OF A SHARP DETERIORATION IN HIS HEALTH - PARTICULARLY THOSE

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 STATE 155714

EMANATING FROM PARIS FOLLOWING HIS RECENT VISIT THERE - MAY HAVE  
EXAGGERATED THE DECLINE. OUR SESSION WAS LONG ENOUGH TO  
PROVIDE SOME TEST OF HIS STAMINA, BUT HE REMAINED ALERT TO THE  
END. ALTHOUGH HE REFERRED TO A PREPARED TEXT FOR HIS BASIS  
COMMENTS, HE OFTEN DEVIATED FROM IT, AND DID NOT READ IT  
MECHANICALLY. INDEED, HE DELIVERED CALL HIS COMMENTS WITH  
A GOOD DEAL OF VERVE AND SEEMED TO CATCH THE POINTS I MADE

PROMPTLY AND WITHOUT HELP. HE WAS AT TIMES FUZZY ON DETAILS - SUCH AS DATES OF MEETINGS (HE HAD TO BE REMINDED THAT THE NEXT VANCE-GROMYKO MEETING WOULD BE IN SEPTEMBER) OR WHETHER THE SOVIET POPULATION IS 252 MILLION OR 258 MILLION - BUT HE HAS LONG BEEN A "BIG PICTURE" MAN WHO DOES NOT RETAIN DETAILS THE WAY KOSYGIN, FOR EXAMPLE, DOES. HIS ENUNCIATION WAS COMPARATIVELY GOOD WITH ONLY OCCASIONAL - AND FOR HIM RELATIVELY SLIGHT - SLURRING. HIS WALK HAD A SLIGHTLY WOODEN CAST TO IT, BUT HE WAS QUITE MOBIL THROUGHOUT, SEVERAL TIMES RISING FROM HIS SEAT TO PUT BITS OF PAPER IN THE WASTBASKET OR TO PERFORM OTHER SMALL CHORES ON IMPULSE.

2. THE FOLLOWING SPECIFIC OBSERVATIONS MAY BE OF INTEREST TO SPECIALISTS IN HIS HEALTH:

-- HE WORE HIS HEARING AID AND HAD NO APPARENT DIFFICULTY UNDERSTANDING NORMAL CONVERSATION.  
-- HIS FACE SHOWED NO VISIBLE MARKS AND THERE WAS NO UNUSUAL PUFFINESS. (HIS FACE, INDEED, SEEMED LESS PUFFY THAN IT DID TO DCM WHEN HE MET WITH ASTRONAUTS AND COSMONAUTS OVER 18 MONTHS AGO OR TO ME IN MARCH  
-- HIS EYES HAD A SOMEWHAT GLAZED OR, PERHAPS BETTER EXPRESSED, OPAQUE APPEARANCE TOWARD THE END, BUT HE REMAINED ALERT TO THE CONVERSATION.  
-- HE STILL DOES NOT SMOKE, BUT HE ASKED SUKHODREV TO SMOKE SO THAT HE COULD ENJOY THE AROMA.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 STATE 155714

3. OBVIOUSLY I CANNOT AND DO NOT PRESENT MY OBSERVATIONS AS INFORMED MEDICAL OPINION, AND I WOULD NOT EXAGGERATE THE POSITIVE. BREZHNEV'S HEALTH IS NOT ROBUST, AND HAS NOT BEEN SO FOR SOME TIME. HOWEVER, I FAILED TO NOTE ANY CLEAR SIGNS OF A RECENT SHARP DECLINE. TOON UNQTE  
VANCE

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## Message Attributes

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**Enclosure:** FOR BRZEZINSKI ONLY  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
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**Review Markings:**  
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